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ABSTRACT

Issues concerning the development of a pedagogically sound internship program, including objectives, student qualifications, requirements, evaluation, and the responsibilities of the director, are examined in this paper that explores the internship program development of the Speech Communication Department of St. Cloud State University at St. Cloud, Minnesota. After discussing these various issues, the problem of getting an internship program started is approached, and resources for developing a program are presented. Membership in the National Society for Internships and Experiential Education, and conversations with intern directors in other departments and universities are recommended as useful resources. In developing a site network, student suggestions serve as an information sharing source, and other sources include department advisory board members, local women's networking organizations, career placement offices, and school alumni. (A policy statement, internship interest form, internship agreement form, site visit reaction form, intern feedback form, and references are appended.) (MM)

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DEVELOPING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

GETTING AN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM STARTED

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Introduction

The internship has been recognized as an academically sound approach to learning, skill development and theory application for years. The medical profession has the most developed history of the internship approach to education; internships are now an integral aspect of a variety of educational programs - journalism, social work, public administration, political science, educational administration, business, gerontology and English. With the recognition of the need to prepare speech communication graduates to enter nonacademic positions, a growing number of speech communication departments have also developed internship programs. The development of these speech communication internship programs is still fairly young and experimental, with little systematic research on development, administration or impact of the programs; yet reports indicate positive results, enthusiastic support, and continuing program growth (Cahn, 1979; Downs, Harper, Hunt, 1976; Harper, 1982; Holley, 1980; Hyre & Owens, 1984; Jamieson & Wolvin, 1976; Konsky, 1977; Wilson, 1980; Wolvin & Jamieson, 1974).

The speech communication discipline is recognizing that the tightening job market demands a curriculum that assists students in translating theory and research into practice,

and which encourages students to develop skills in the professional setting. Also of vital importance to employment of speech communication graduates is increased visibility of the discipline in the employment market, as well as an increased understanding of the skills and knowledge that are the focus of a speech communication degree (Harper, 1982; Konsky, 1977). Harper (1982) demonstrates this in noting that the skills that are ranked by employers as important to successful employment are skills specific to the training of speech communication majors (verbal communication skills, interpersonal skills, decision making, leadership, problem solving), yet go unrecognized as the focus of the communication major. An effective internship program can become a vehicle for increased outside awareness, program promotion, and development of a close relationship "between the school and the employment market - business, industry, and community" (Wolvin & Jamieson, 1974).

Assuming, then, that a department acknowledges and accepts the need for an internship program, the major concern next becomes the development of such a program. For a speech communication department to undertake the development of a pedagogically sound internship program, there are a number of issues which must be considered and directly addressed - objectives, student qualifications, and awarding of internships, requirements, awarding of credit, evaluation,

need for paid internships, development of a site network, responsibilities of the director, etc. The question of just where to start, what resources are available and how to develop the program also become issues. Konsky (1977) and Phelps and Timmis (1984) directly address these issues and offer suggestions and guidelines. (Konsky addresses a number of important "first step" issues). In an effort to further assist developing internship programs, the remainder of this paper will explore how the Speech Communication Department of St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud, Minnesota, addressed these issues, and will report on the status of a fairly young and developing internship program.

Background

The St. Cloud State University Speech Communication Department has grown from a department claiming 39 officially admitted majors in 1977-78, to a department boasting nearly 100 officially admitted majors in 1983-84. (These recent numbers do not include minors, nor those students not yet admitted). Concurrent with this growth has been the focus on careers other than education, and an increasing interest in internship experiences. Until fall 1984, internships were arranged through the department chairperson as requested by each student, but with the growing numbers the department

recognized a need to formalize the program under the direction of a person specifically appointed to direct internships. A faculty person was appointed as internship director, fall, 1984. Although the director is responsible for the internship program throughout the year, the present arrangement is that the bulk of internships be scheduled spring and summer, and that the faculty director receive one course release in spring as well as a one course "internship" load for summer. Ten interns have been scheduled from September 1984 through June 1985, generating a total of 98 quarter credit hours, with an estimated 12 interns to be scheduled for summer 1985.

Procedures and Issues

Director's Responsibilities

The role of the internship director at SCSU was defined to be both supervisor and coordinator. This is workable with the size of the program at this point in time. Responsibilities include developing and assessing program policy, maintaining academic quality, developing and maintaining an internship site network, promoting the program, consulting with students who are considering and/or are involved in internships, contacting the site supervisors

during the internships, visiting sites, and assessing the success of the individual internship.

Although other faculty within the department are not directly responsible for the internship program their role is still important to the success of the program - they help to promote the internship not only among students, but also within the university and community, and help to develop the site network. The director also relies on their knowledge of the student's skills and abilities. In addition, intern and agency feedback concerning curriculum are channeled back through the department. It is imperative, then, for the director to inform the department of the program's progress.

Intern and Internship Site Qualifications

The next phase for SCSU was to develop a formal policy statement consistent with the philosophy of the department (see Appendix A for policy statement). Because the more informal procedures which were utilized earlier appeared to function well, many of these were adopted. The internship program is presently open to any officially admitted speech communication major or minor who has completed one half of the speech communication courses required, and who is in the junior or senior year. A student may register for 4-16 quarter credit hours, depending on the nature of the internship; a student with a 40 hour work week for 10 weeks

would qualify for 16 credits in most situations. One aspect of the St. Cloud State program which is different from many existing programs is that the student is responsible for locating and securing the internship. The director develops contacts and opportunities about which the student is informed, but the student is not limited to these recommendations and is encouraged to explore the areas which seem of highest interest to him or her. This procedure supports the one department objective of giving the student experience with the job search process. It also defines the responsibility of an agency's intern selection to rest with that agency, and the responsibility of an intern's site choice and self presentation in seeking an internship to rest with that intern. (An added benefit of this approach is that interns have secured some very creative and unique internships - for example: international, out of state, with special groups such as the hearing handicapped). The director's role then in the early stages of consulting with the student seeking an internship is to assist the student in developing goals, assessing skills and needs (see Appendix B for internship interest form). This also helps in the later phase of designing the learning agreement with the agency.

Three criteria which the student's potential internship must meet in order to qualify as a speech communication internship are: 1. The internship must have a primary focus

on communication; 2. It must be a new learning experience (not a vehicle for earning credit for a job or position previously held); and 3. There must be a supervisor at the site. The director must have evidence of these before approval will be given to move to the next phase - the negotiation of the learning agreement. These three criteria also ensure quality among those internships which the students have generated. There is no specific department policy concerning paid internships, although this may be a consideration for the individual student in selecting potential internship sites.

The Learning Agreement

After the intern has secured an internship site, the next phase is to develop the learning agreement (see Appendix C). This contract outlines the learning goals of the intern, the student's job/position (as well as academic) responsibilities, criteria for evaluation, and responsibilities of both the supervisor and director. The student is only given permission to register for the internship after the agreement form has been signed by all three parties - intern, site supervisor and internship director. The preliminary phase usually demands the most time of the director and intern as they work through a rough draft of the agreement. This is then negotiated between the

intern and job supervisor. The learning agreement is an important aspect of preparing for the internship as it clarifies expectations, assures a valid communication-focused learning experience for the intern, and will later become a basis of criteria for evaluation.

Evaluation

The policy statement (Appendix A) and learning agreement form (Appendix C) outline assignments which the intern may be expected to complete as a basis for evaluation of the internship. All interns are required, at the minimum, to maintain a daily log and to complete a final paper; other requirements depend on the nature of the internship. During the quarter, interns are often required to share their experience in a related class (e.g., organizational communication, interpersonal for business), and to attend one on-campus meeting of all the quarter's interns early in that quarter. Speech communication students at SCSU are graded on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory (S/U) basis only (no letter grade). This facilitates the evaluation process in terms of assigning a grade. Through weekly contacts with the intern, a three-way discussion among intern, supervisor and director at the time of the site visit (usually completed just prior to midquarter), periodic phone conversations with the supervisor during the internship, reading of the log and

final paper, the director and the intern are able to candidly discuss strengths and weaknesses throughout, as well as when the internship draws to a close. The primary focus at all times for both the director and intern is that the internship process is one of personal insight, discovery, and learning. The director functions as an advisor, supporter, facilitator to the student during this process (see Appendix D for the director's site-visit reaction form, and Appendix E for the intern's feedback form).

Resources for Developing an Internship Program

As director of the SCSU communication internship program, I found my earliest frustrations grounded in "getting started". What was being done? What options were there from which to choose? How could I begin to develop a site network? I found the following areas to be of help to me.

Beginning the Program

It was not only helpful to know what had been the previous procedure in our department, but also helpful to talk with internship directors throughout St. Cloud State. SCSU has no set policy that applies to all departments, so that conversations with directors in criminal justice, social

work, journalism etc... yielded a wealth of information as well as varying perspectives. Also, through letters and phone conversations with directors of communication internships at other universities, and through reading articles written by them, I was able to garner additional helpful information specific to the discipline.

Membership in the National Society for Internships and Experiential Education (Note 1) proved to be an invaluable resource for me in the early stages, and promises to be so continuously. PANEL, the Pier Assistance Network in Experiential Learning, is a vital aspect of this organization (Hall, 1984). Minnesota also offers the Minnesota Association for Field Experience Learning which sponsors monthly meetings focused on issues, as well as a yearly conference. Not only does membership in this organization update the academic director on important issues, but also allows for expanding the site network as its membership is composed of agencies' directors as well. I trust that other states also have similar associations, and I urge academic directors to seek out this information.

Developing a Site Network

One of the unpredicted advantages of encouraging students to generate their own internship sites is the contribution this has made to the site network. Not only do

students often secure internships with agencies not previously in the network, but I have also found students to be a willing information sharing source - informing me of other potential sites and contacts which may not meet their needs but which may be of interest to other potential interns.

In an attempt to further develop the site network in the community, I have found it helpful to become an active member of the local women's networking organization (Forum of Executive Women), and to share information with and attend meetings of the Chamber of Commerce (especially the committee which addresses education-related issues, and community-university relations). Other community based organizations which have been key in developing the network are the Personnel Association (many of our interns are interested in internships in this and related areas), the United Way, and the Voluntary Action Center (a coordinating agency for all volunteer and service agencies in the community). Similar organizations exist in other communities, and their potential should not be overlooked.

The SCSU Speech Communication Department has just recently developed an advisory board of key community persons to assist in curriculum development and to further promote community-department relations. I am looking forward to this as a potential source/help in developing the site network, as

well as in improving the internship program itself. Departments might consider developing such an advisory board for this and other related issues.

Because of our proximity to a large metropolitan area (Minneapolis-St. Paul), a number of students prefer to develop internships in the metropolitan area. Of particular help to me here has been the Twin City Area Urban Corps - an internship program (developed to model the New York City Urban Corps), which places students from post-secondary schools in service-learning internship positions with government and nonprofit agencies in the Twin Cities Area (Note 2). It now fills over 1,200 internships per year. An additional resource in this area, as well as in suggesting other ideas for internships, is the book 1985 Internships (Note 3).

I have also found the Career Planning and Placement Office on our campus to be an excellent resource. By attending Career Days and Agency Days sponsored by this office, I am able to further develop the network. Now that this office is aware of our program, it willingly shares internship information with our department. The alumni are another ready source of contacts for promoting and placing interns; a recently distributed department alumni survey contains questions which I am hopeful will offer

possibilities, and my association with persons at the Alumni Office on campus should also prove to be helpful to our program.

Conclusion

The academically sound internship program benefits students, departments, and employees alike. We at St. Cloud State University are excited about this potential and the progress made in this past year of developing the formalized program. Hopefully comments, forms, and resources shared here will generate discussion and ideas in other departments and programs.

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Wolvin, Andrew D., & Jamieson, Kathleen M. The internship in speech communication: An alternative instructional strategy. Today's Speech, Fall 1974, 3-9.

Reference Notes

1. National Society for Internships and Experiential Education, 122 St. Mary's Street, Raleigh, N.C. 27605.

2. Twin City Area Urban Corps, 107B City Hall, Minneapolis, MN 55415, 612-348-6967.

3. Hulse, Lisa (ed.) 1985 internships: 34,000 on-the-job training opportunities for all types of careers. Cincinnati, Ohio: Writers Digest, 1984.

POLICY STATEMENT, SPC 444, INTERNSHIP IN SPEECH COMMUNICATION

Course Description

444 Internship in Speech Communication. Department approved and directed field experience with an approved agency, for speech communication majors or minors. Learning contract required. Arrangements must be completed four weeks prior to registration. Credits apply as general electives. By permission only. 4 - 16 Cr. DEMAND.

Philosophy and Objectives

The Department of Speech Communication at St. Cloud State University recognizes the educational value of those practical experiences which involve the speech communication student outside of the traditional classroom, allowing for professional application of communication theory and skills. Because of a commitment to this philosophy, Speech 444, the Speech Communication Internship, has been established to meet the following objectives:

1. To apply speech communication theory and skills to practical communication experience within an organization;

2. To further develop communication skills necessary within an organizational setting;

3. To gain further knowledge of how communication functions through experience within a specific organization;

4. To lay the foundation for future job placement, and to gain experience with the job search process;

5. To learn how to structure goals geared to life/work planning.

In addition, the department recognizes the benefits which an academically sound internship program provides for the department. Besides providing other learning strategies for the student, other benefits are: promotion of the speech communication department; feedback which can be utilized in determining the need for new courses and adjustment of existing courses; promotion of the potential of the communication major to employers.

Procedure and Requirements

The speech communication internship is designed to be a structured practical professional experience; therefore it is to be under the supervision of qualified academic and agency personnel--a department internship director and an internship supervisor in the agency. The following requirements apply to internships which are approved and supervised within this department:

1. Internships can be designed to earn 4 - 16 general elective credits. The number of credits is determined by the nature of the position, and is negotiated with the internship director. Registration is processed in the same manner as other courses requiring permission.

2. The intern must be an officially declared speech communication major or minor;

3. The intern should have completed one half of the speech communication courses (beyond 161) required for the major or minor, and should be in the junior or senior year;

4. The internship must have a primary focus on communication;

5. The internship must be a new learning experience;

6. The intern must have a supervisor on the job;

7. The intern must negotiate a written learning agreement, outlining learning objectives and academic responsibilities, two weeks prior to registration. This is to be designed with, and agreeable to, the department internship director, the internship supervisor, and the intern;

8. Internships will be scheduled for spring and summer quarters.

Internship Director Job Description

Coordinate and supervise the speech communication internship program. This includes developing and assessing program policy, maintaining academic quality of the program, developing and maintaining an internship site network, promoting the program, consulting with students who are considering and/or are involved in internships, contacting job supervisors during the internships, visiting internship sites, and assessing the success of the individual internship.

Evaluation of Internships

Internships are evaluated by the department internship director, and are graded on a pass/fail (S/U) basis. The learning goals, established in the learning agreement form, are suggested for use as a basic guide in assessing the internship. All, or a combination of, the following areas of assessment may be used:

1. A daily journal of activities, related professional readings, and personal reactions maintained by the student;

2. A paper, evaluating the internship experience in terms of the learning goals and objectives specified on the learning agreement form, submitted by the student at the end of the internship;

3. A portfolio of materials developed during the internship, compiled by the student during the experience (where applicable);

4. The director's site visit and other formal contacts with the internship supervisor and the intern;

5. A memo from the internship supervisor to the director noting successful completion of the internship by the intern.

The intern and director will determine evaluation criteria appropriate to the specific internship when negotiating the learning agreement.

Internship Interest Form

Your answers to the following questions will assist the internship director in better meeting your needs as an intern. If your answer for one question would be the same as a previously answered question, just refer to that question number (eg... see question 12).

1. Name_____ Date _____
2. Address_____ 3. Phone_____
4. Major_____ 5. Minor (related area)_____
6. Have you officially declared communication major or minor? _____
7. Speech Communication Advisor _____
8. Number of credits completed in Speech Communication at end of present quarter _____
9. Average grade point in Speech Communication_____
10. Year in college (Fresh, Soph, Junior, Senior)
11. Quarter for which internship is desired _____
12. Number of credits for internship _____
13. Type of internship position desired and/or description of skills which you want to develop/apply in the internship.

_____

_____

_____

_____

14. Specific communication courses (and other courses) related to this area?

_____

_____

_____

15. Any related work/personal experience?

_____

_____

16. Why are you applying for an internship in Speech Communication?

_____

_____

_____

_____

17. Agencies to which you have selected to apply or to which your are thinking of applying?

_____

_____

_____

18. Other limitations, problems, concerns (eg.. need for paying internship, specific geographic location, limited working hours available, etc.).

_____

_____

_____

_____

Internship Agreement Form

Speech Communication Department, St. Cloud State University

Name of Intern: _____ Internship Director: Roseanna Ross

Address: _____ Address: Speech Communication Dept. PAC 215

_____ St. Cloud State University
St. Cloud, Minnesota 56301

Phone: _____ Phone: 255-3253 ; 252-3213 (home)

Major(s): _____ _____

Minor(s): _____ Quarter: _____ Crs. Hrs: _____

Internship Title: _____

Firm or Institution: _____

Address: _____

Internship Supervisor: _____

Phone: _____

I. Internship Objectives

A. Speech Communication Related:

B. Other:

II. Job Description and Assignments (include average number of hours per week intern will spend on the job).

III. Evaluation of Internship - internship evaluation will be based on the following as indicated:

_____ A daily journal of activites, related professional readings, and personal reaction maintained by the student;

_____ A paper, evaluating the internship experience in terms of learning goals and objectives specified in this agreement form (submitted by the student);

_____ A portfolio of materials developed by the student during the experience;

_____ Director's site visit and other formal contacts with the supervisor and the intern;

_____ A memo from the internship supervisor to the director noting successful completion of the internship by the intern;

_____ Additional: _____

_____

IV. Responsibilities

A. Student

_____ Maintain above described daily journal; submit to the director on these dates: _____; _____;

_____ Submit paper and portfolio to director on this date: _____;

_____ Contact director weekly;

_____ Present an informal description of internship experience to class in this department during the quarter of the internship if possible (or the quarter immediately following);

_____ Attend an internship meeting on campus, date _____;

_____ Other: _____

_____

B. Faculty Director

_____ Contact internship supervisor at least twice during the internship;

_____ Visit internship site at least once during the internship (if possible);

_____ Assess the success of the internship in achieving the intern's learning objectives

_____ Other:

C. On Site Supervisor

_____ Oversee the duties of the intern;

_____ Maintain ongoing contact with intern to discuss progress of the internship;

_____ Meet with the director and intern during the site visit;

_____ Contact the director regarding concernswhich cannot be negotiated with the intern;

_____ Submit a memo to the director verifying intern's successful completion of the internship (date due _____).

_____ Other:

Signatures

Internship Supervisor: _____

Internship Director: _____

Student Intern : _____

Site Visit Reaction Form
(completed by director following site visit)

Intern's Name_____ Date _____

Supervisor's Name_____

1. Personal appearance

2. Courtesy

3. Tact and common sense

4. Sense of responsibility and initiative

5. Thoroughness of preparation/quality of work

6. Attitude

7. Effect of intern on job site

8. Attitude of coworkers toward student

9. Fit of student's responsibilities with internship learning contract goals.

10. What most impresses supervisor about intern?

11. What one aspect would make this an even better internship?

12. Other comments:

Intern Feedback Form

Your comments will assist the director and the department in better meeting the needs of future interns.

1. Based on your experience, what is an "internship"? How does it fit into a college education? How did this experience help you to grow personally and professionally?

2. Describe and assess the job site training supervision you received as an intern. Was it helpful, useful?

3. What earlier classroom experiences (and/or specific classes) were useful in preparing you for your internship?

4. How could classroom experiences have better prepared you for your internship? (Also consider specific classes which you wish you would have chosen to better prepare yourself for the internship).

5. In what way was the department director helpful to you during your internship?

6. How could the department director have been of more help during your internship?

Additional Comments:

Name (Optional) _____

Internship Title_____

Internship Site (optional)_____